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LETTER DATED 5 AUGUST 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to forward to you, on behalf of the Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States and Head of State of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, General Abdulsalami Alhaji Abubakar, the text of the final communiqué issued at the end of the first meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Committee of Seven on Guinea-Bissau of the Economic Community of West African States, held at Accra on 4 August 1998 (see annex).

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ibrahim A. GAMBARI
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Final communiqué of the first meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Committee of Seven on Guinea-Bissau of the Economic Community of West African States, held at Accra on 4 August 1998

1. Following the meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Defence of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) held at Abidjan on 3 July 1998, at which a decision was taken to constitute a Committee of Seven on Guinea-Bissau, ECOWAS Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the said Committee held their first meeting on 4 August 1998 at Accra, Ghana.

2. The following Member States were represented at the meeting of the Committee of Seven:

- Burkina Faso
- Republic of Côte d'Ivoire
- Republic of Gambia
- Republic of Ghana
- Republic of Guinea
- Federal Republic of Nigeria
- Republic of Senegal

3. The meeting was also attended by representatives of the Secretariat of the Organization of African Unity and the ECOWAS secretariat.

4. The representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations also honoured the invitation to attend the meeting.

5. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guinea-Bissau, as a special guest, briefed the meeting on the situation prevailing in his country.

6. The Ministers reviewed the situation in Guinea-Bissau and recalled that the primary objective of ECOWAS in that country is the restoration of peace and restitution of the authority of the Government of the elected President Joao Bernardo Vieira.

7. They also recalled the mandate of the Committee of Seven as defined by the joint ministerial meeting held at Abidjan on 3 July 1998, reviewed the extent to which that mandate had been implemented and identified those tasks which remained to be completed.

8. The Ministers noted the political developments in Guinea-Bissau since the joint ministerial meeting was held at Abidjan on 3 July 1998 and specifically

the ongoing initiatives by the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries in that ECOWAS Member State.

9. The Ministers welcomed the truce declared by the loyalist troops and the rebel forces.

10. They stated that lasting peace could not be achieved in Guinea-Bissau unless initiatives to resolve the crisis are undertaken within the context of efforts to safeguard subregional security.

11. They underscored the need to support regional or subregional African initiatives to ensure peace and security, as repeatedly stated by the United Nations. They also recalled the unwavering support of the Organization of African Unity for conflict resolution efforts undertaken by ECOWAS.

12. The Ministers reaffirmed that ECOWAS must play a primordial role in the resolution of the crisis in Guinea-Bissau. They recalled that the mandate of the ministerial Committee of Seven was to closely monitor events as they unfolded in the crisis in Guinea-Bissau.

13. They expressed their preparedness to cooperate with the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries and to support any other initiatives which might contribute to the realization of ECOWAS objectives in Guinea-Bissau.

14. The Ministers agreed that the delegation of the Committee of Seven should proceed immediately to Guinea-Bissau to meet with President Joao Bernardo Vieira, the Government and the other party to the conflict.

15. The Ministers reaffirmed their support for Guinea and Senegal and expressed gratitude to the neighbouring countries which continued to welcome and extend hospitality to refugees from Guinea-Bissau, despite the difficult situation in their own countries.

16. They expressed appreciation to the United Nations and to all other institutions engaged in providing humanitarian assistance to civilian victims of the rebellion of 7 June 1998.

17. The Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Committee of Seven on Guinea-Bissau of ECOWAS expressed profound gratitude to His Excellency Jerry John Rawlings, President of the Republic of Ghana, and to the Ghanaian Government and people for the generous hospitality and the excellent facilities made available for the success of their meeting.